



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Avoiding the Big Surprise

Contraceptive Methods Available to Patients of Office-Based Physicians and Title X Clinics — United States, 2009–2010

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

For many women, finding out they're pregnant is a joyous occasion. However, nearly half of pregnancies in the U.S. are unintended. For women who want to avoid pregnancy, use of contraceptives is usually the best alternative.

Dr. Crystal Tyler is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss ways women can avoid unintended pregnancy. Welcome to the show, Crystal.

[Dr. Tyler] Thanks for having me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Crystal, what's the most common method of birth control in the U.S.?

[Dr. Tyler] The most common contraceptive methods in the U.S. are birth-control pills and male condoms, but they have typical use failure rates of 15 percent and seven percent, respectively.

[Dr. Gaynes] So what's the most effective form of birth control?

[Dr. Tyler] To be effective, a method needs to be used consistently and correctly. The most effective reversible methods are IUDs and implants which deliver contraceptives for up to 90 days. With respect to permanent methods, the most effective methods are vasectomy and tubal ligation.

[Dr. Gaynes] Since nearly half of all pregnancies are unintentional, why are so few women using birth control?

[Dr. Tyler] There are a number of barriers that women face to using birth control, including access to the methods and method cost, especially for IUDs. Additionally, there's lack of knowledge that women have which leads to incorrect or inconsistent use.

[Dr. Gaynes] What factors are involved in selecting the most effective method of birth control?

[Dr. Tyler] Women should really consider their lifestyle. For example, if women can't remember to take a multi-vitamin every day then perhaps the birth control pill isn't best

for them. Or if a woman doesn't like getting shots, then the injectable contraceptive methods might not be best for her. Women should really consult with their partner and their health care provider to determine the best and most effective method for them.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are there ways to get a contraceptive if someone doesn't have a primary health care provider?

[Dr. Tyler] Yes. The government has provided funding to some family planning clinics to offer contraceptive methods at reduced or even no cost. Often times they have a variety of contraceptive methods available on site.

[Dr. Gaynes] Crystal, where can listeners get more information about avoiding unintended pregnancies?

[Dr. Tyler] Listeners can go to www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth, and that's all one word.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Crystal. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Crystal Tyler about ways to avoid unintended pregnancies.

Remember, women should consult with their partner, as well as their health care provider, to determine the most effective method of contraception for them.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.